

July 7, 2013

Jane Wynn: My View

As you may know, our good friend and counsel, Marshall Matz, will not be with us in KC. After 33 years of representing SNA (40 years, if you count his years with the Congress) Marshall, Roger Szemraj and OFW Law has been replaced by SNA. OFW is the nation's premier agriculture and nutrition law firm. Very few SNA members participated in this decision. The full PPL Committee and past PPL Committees were not consulted or asked their opinion of the legislative services that have been provided.

Marshall has a very strong record of success for SNA: Under his leadership:

- Our programs have expanded and the funding has increased.
- We protected and continued the commodity program.
- We have an Institute in Mississippi.
- Working with Republicans and Democrats, we defeated every proposal to eliminate Section 4 funding and enact block grants.
- Two of our Past Presidents got high level positions in the Administration, because of Marshall.
- In 2010, we received our first increase in entitlement funding in decades.
- This year, Marshall and Roger, working with SNA staff, led an effort to make the grains and protein flexibility permanent through USDA administrative action or legislation supported by Congressional "report" language.
- Marshall, more than anyone else, turned ASFSA into a "white hat" organization, seen as an advocate for children. I personally remember that this was not our reputation when Marshall started. He changed our image and how allied organizations viewed SNA in Washington.

Marshall and OFW Law's bipartisan team has now been replaced as legislative counsel by the law firm that serves as our General Counsel. I am sure there are efficiencies in combining these services in one law firm but Barnes & Thornburg has little expertise or credibility on nutrition programs. See www.btlaw.com.

I am not concerned about Marshall, who is in high demand. I am very worried about the future of SNA and the millions of children we serve each day.

We were out front and a leader when we were expanding our programs, but we are on defense when it comes to obesity and health. When obesity started to gain national attention, SNA rejected Marshall's idea to focus our foundation on obesity and jump to the front of the issue. The White House, USDA and allied organizations now see us as a barrier to improving the quality of CN programs. That is just terrible.

SNA must be a leader on children's health just as we were on fighting hunger. To be effective for our own members and have political power in Washington we must be about the children we serve. We are becoming a trade association and that concerns me.

We need Marshall back for the 2015 reauthorization, which has already started with the introduction of legislation this year and the recent House hearing on child nutrition. We also really need to think about where SNA is headed. For SNA to be effective for our own members we must be about the children we serve. Our power comes from our advocacy for children. We are losing that reputation and firing Marshall, Roger and OFW will further hurt our effectiveness and our credibility. It already has last week with key allied organizations and political supporters on both sides of the political aisle. If you share my concern, please contact the new SNA CEO, Patricia Montague, and our Board of Directors.

Thank you,

Jane Wynn, Past President, SNA

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